

## INNOVATION STRATEGIES, ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, AND SOFT SKILLS: A PERSPECTIVE FROM HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND EQUITY

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### **Abstract:**

Soft skills, human development, and equity are crucial in organizational management. This research aimed to develop innovation strategies to strengthen the organizational structure of Hermanos Villeras S.A.S in Barranquilla, Colombia. These areas were investigated with 18 employees and 123 clients. A mixed-method approach was employed, including surveys and interviews. Employee profiles and soft skills were identified, with data carefully analyzed. The study was proactive, strengthening an innovation prototype. Findings revealed that 61.1% of employees consider soft skills essential for collaborative work, while 38.9% mentioned occasional occurrence of time management and planned activities. Regarding human development and equity, 38.9% emphasized their significance. Additionally, 44.4% indicated facing problems occasionally, highlighting the need for increased proactivity. This study offers valuable insights to enhance organizational effectiveness and employee satisfaction.

**Keywords:** human development; administrative structure; soft skills; equal opportunities.

### **Introduction**

During human evolution, the perception of development has varied over time, influenced by historical, social and cultural factors. Family, school, and society play an essential role in this process, according to Papalia et al. (2010), by transmitting social patterns and values through the imitation of patterns, thus influencing biopsychosocial development. Mieles and García (2010) highlight socialization as a continuous process that contributes to the formation of personal identity and cultural transmission. Based on this, the historical importance of the family and school in the acquisition of cultural patterns and social values is recognized, allowing the individual to interact with his or her environment and the world of work.

According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1990: 31), human development is considered as the equality of conditions and opportunities for the achievement of a fuller life. In this sense, socio-economic factors play an important role. The way in which the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) allocates expenditures generates total growth for the betterment of the human being. The dual path of growth and human development is due to the resources from which they come and the economic growth which, apart from being an essential objective, the nation is recognized as contributing to this increase (Ranis and Stewart, 2002).

Another commitment is related to the current era, marked by technology and globalization, which demands the transformation and adaptation of organizations. Therefore, people management is fundamental to face these changes and achieve positive results in market competition and self-management, to ensure market permanence and to improve the company.

To achieve this, the organizational structure must be linked to effective people management and administration, together with the implementation of technologies and organizational growth. The role of human development in organizational transformation is highlighted, focusing on aspects such as competency performance and strengthening human development.

However, transformation requires changes that can create complexity and hinder communication. In addition, the organizational structure can delay the implementation of changes due to different aspects, such as the lack of vision of managers, the inability to form effective work teams, the absence of a climate of common effort, the lack of importance given to the process and the sense of urgency, as well as the lack of implementation of activities to counteract the resistance to change.

Human development, in terms of its needs, such as infrastructural services such as housing, shelter and process, is negatively affected when these are reduced, resulting in a lower quality of life. As the horizon of their needs broadens, the supply capacity will enable them to improve their quality of life (Garcia, 2018).

As their possibilities increase, human development will generate hope and space within the social context. This will allow him/her to make decisions and participate in health and education policies and to occupy positions that dignify him/her as a growing human being. This type of action allows them to adjust to established social conditions and permanently participate in norms and laws that optimize innovation resources, which allow them to grow (Soto et al., 2018).

For the theory of human development, the mediation of the relationship between the state and society explains the relationship of citizenship, in which resources must be at the service of citizens, as well as between government, political and civil actors (García, 2017). Human development is defined as comfort related to quality of life and well-being. However, it is underpinned by an intersubjectivity of the needs of future species posed by sustainable development (Carreón et al., 2017). From this perspective, human development overcomes the attachment to things, the sense of community, solidarity, and participation by separating the local from the regional, but refrains from acknowledging international events, multilateral development

and trade alliances, tariffs and so on, which integrate the global and collaborative world (García et al., 2017).

Goleman (1995) and Mayer et al. (2000) highlight the importance of emotional skills for success in personal and professional life. Incorporating emotional intelligence into innovation strategies can contribute to strengthening organizational structure. Furthermore, integrating emotional intelligence into these strategies not only strengthens organizational structure by improving the quality of relationships and communication in the work environment, but also increases organizational resilience and agility. Companies that cultivate emotional intelligence among their employees and leaders are better able to face unforeseen challenges, adapt to disruptive changes and maintain a work environment where emotional well-being and equity are priorities.

Currently, in Colombia, micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) represent a significant part of the national business fabric, contributing to the country's productive apparatus and economic development. Law 590 of 2000 (Ley MiPymes) regulates the development of these enterprises in the country. However, this law was amended by Law 905 of 2004, which includes the concept of Famiempresa, benefiting artisans and promoting equal opportunities for women.

From the perspective of training in human development and equity, the knowledge society in the framework of modern management recognizes training as a process in which human beings acquire skills and knowledge, improving job opportunities and personal growth, both inside and outside the organization. This promotes a level playing field for all involved. Complementing Jiménez et al. (2023), vocational training is effective when it is linked to intellectual and cultural growth. In this way, by having an impact on the company's human resources, comprehensive training is achieved that has an impact on productivity, leadership and soft skills.

Human development is then considered to be aligned with quality of life, but the differences in quality of life are also highlighted. What prevails then are health, education, and employment, as well as the method of state commissioning, as opposed to the competencies and skills that this subject has in the context where he or she is located. This indicates that their comfort is relevant to the opportunities provided by the government system and their self-management to improve their existence (Sandoval et al., 2017).

Research on the variable 'Soft Competencies' by Vallejo (2019) reveals that, from the employees' perspective, all dimensions were evaluated positively, as their average values exceeded the threshold of agreement. When examining the variable 'Job Performance', a similar trend was observed in all its dimensions, indicating that the job performance of the employees was at a high level in areas such as Interpersonal Relations, Teamwork, Organization, Quality, Results-Oriented, and Initiative. However, soft skills were identified as having a significant influence on job performance only in the Social Skills dimension, while the other dimensions, such as Self-Awareness, Self-Regulation, Motivation and Empathy, did not show a clear influence on job performance.

On the other hand, Romero et al. (2021) concluded in their study that soft skills are a set of abilities that allow people to interact effectively with others. They are essential for success in the workplace, as they contribute to the development of interpersonal relationships, leadership,

communication, teamwork, empathy, assertiveness, planning, management, and ethics. Some tips for developing soft skills include practicing effective communication, both verbal and non-verbal, developing the ability to work in a team, being empathetic with others, being assertive, planning and organizing, being a good leader and acting ethically.

Guerra-Báez (2019) considers that for the management of soft skills it is necessary to address the skills of assertive communication, understood as the mediation process based on good treatment. It is also necessary to work on cognitive competences based on knowledge and know-how, to enable timely decision-making, and finally, emotionality as an element of recognition to deal with complicated situations (Mangrulkar et al., 2001).

For the World Bank (2018), globality poses the absence of values as a generated character, in which it is pointed out that soft skills are affected by this lack of values, making it difficult to respond adequately to the challenges posed by modernity. The formation of academic management, as stated in the PEI, CADE Education IPAE (2019), is also a relevant factor in this aspect.

In this regard, Van-der et al. (2013) consider that to the extent that skills are prioritized, human beings will have a greater approach to effective communication and the ability to refer to others without frustrating their feelings. This will lead to improved interpersonal relationships. Rojas de Escalona (2010) highlights that the functions of cognitive skills play an important role in the way in which the individual evaluates and controls their experiences based on their lived moments and makes a divergence between their achieved performance and their desired performance (Chaves, 2016).

Following Sternberg (1986), who proposes that cognitive development must combine the skills involved in knowledge, such as problem solving, problem comprehension, interpretation, analysis of schemes and pictures, the procedure for generating alternatives to solve tasks, and understanding and generating problems. The ability to understand plays an important role in cognitive ability, as it enters the interface of appropriation of knowledge in order to put it into practice. Knowledge is thus generated from the point of view of cognitive skills.

Competencies, according to Mondy (2010), encompass various knowledge, skills, traits and behaviors that can be technical in nature and are related to interpersonal skills in the organizational context. Innovation in organizational structure involves more than simply performing activities differently; it involves embedding innovation in the organization, understood as variations that generate positive outcomes for the environment. According to Flores (2012), changes are modifications that occur in the work environment and represent a crucial aspect in the innovation of organizations and their ability to adapt to the challenges of modernity.

In this sense, in the company Hermanos Villera S.A.S. the need to address training based on soft skills and labour competences is evident. In addition, work overload, the ability to manage interpersonal relations, leadership management, teamwork, centralization of information on medicine orders, centralization of the systematization of financial information, training in the level of learning for human development, motivation and commitment to the organization of the people involved, and adaptation and commitment to change are also identified. However, the company requires innovation strategies in the organizational structure and human development training for

its employees and customers (consumers, doctors, ordinary people, legal entities, natural persons). See figure N0.1 Empathizing moment (SWOT technique).

**Figure 1**

*Empathizing moment (the DAFO technique)*

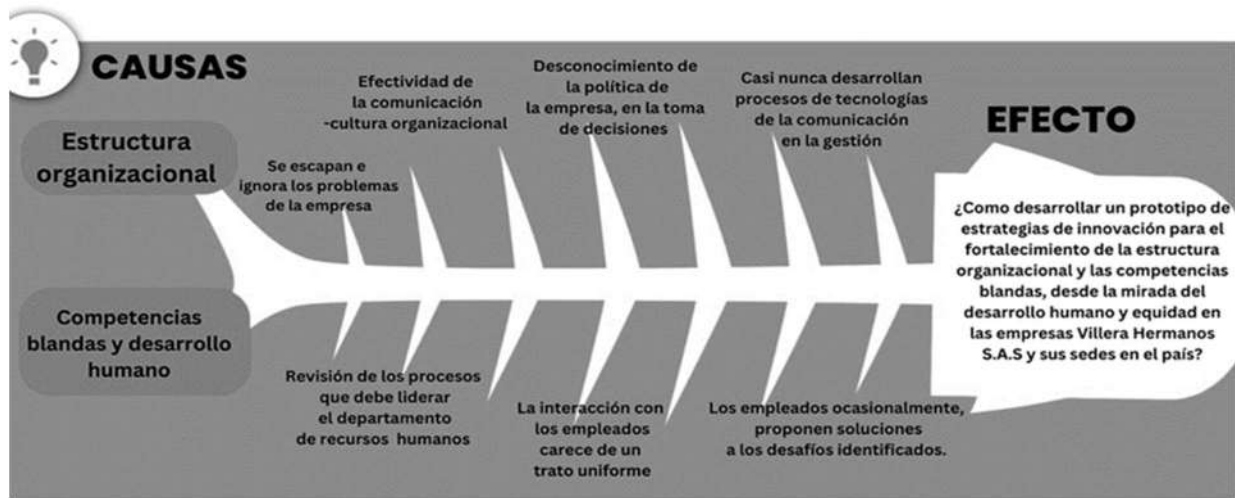


**Note: Source:** Own elaboration

The DAFO analysis has been derived from the evaluation of various instruments, providing a comprehensive view of the company's current situation. It highlights areas for improvement and offers a perspective on opportunities for growth. Based on the above mentioned innovation strategies for strengthening the organizational structure, the following question arises: How to develop a prototype of innovation strategies for strengthening the organizational structure and soft competences in the companies Villera Hermanos S.A.S. and its branches in the country?

**Figure 2**

Defining moment (Ishikawa's spine technique)



**Note: Source:** Own elaboration

In order to answer the question, the following general objective is proposed: To design innovation strategies to strengthen the organizational structure based on soft competencies, with a perspective focused on human development and equity. To fulfil the general objective, the following specific objectives are established:

- To build the organizational structure, promoting inclusiveness and equity in human development.
- To lead the different areas and research, operational, technical, and administrative activities, as well as the processes and events that are carried out, according to the guidelines and directives of the research project, defined by the executing entity and the allied entity.
- Design training strategies aimed at the construction of each of the categories and variables of study to operationalize the prototype.

## Methodology

The study conducted between the Universidad de la Costa CUC and the company Hermanos Villera S.A.S. in a call for MINCIENCIAS was carried out with a mixed design, using a concurrent triangulation model (Hernández et al., 2014). The importance of the model lay in confronting results and validating quantitative and qualitative elements, using it as a method to minimize weaknesses and take advantage of opportunities and strengths. This allowed the necessary information to be collected from quantitative and qualitative data during the analysis, interpretation, and discussion of the results. A qualitative phase (interviews) and a quantitative phase (employee and customer questionnaires) were developed, giving more depth to both phases. The instruments were applied by experts who contributed to the elaboration of the scripts of each of the instruments applied. The variables and their categories are based on the work of Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2000).

### Mixed design.

The mixed design used corresponds to concurrent triangulation, which, according to Hernández et al. (2014), is used to validate and confront quantitative and qualitative data in a crossed manner, taking advantage of the advantages of each method and minimizing their weaknesses. Quantitative and qualitative data are collected to generate discussion of the two types of results found, considering categories and variables.

### Participants

The participants of this project are composed of 18 employees (general manager, fiscal auditor, commercial coordinator, administrative and financial coordinator, human resources coordinator, commercial assistant, accounting assistant, portfolio manager, human resources assistant, marketing and communications, commercial supervisor, customer service representative, medical visitor, veterinary visitor) and 123 clients (consumers, doctors, common people, legal persons, natural persons) of the company Hermanos Villeras S.A.S., located in the municipality of Barranquilla.

### Strategies and instruments

The instruments used were questionnaires and interviews that were subjected to expert judgement by a doctor of national and international stature. These instruments included:

Online questionnaires analyzed using SPSS software for quantitative data. Four questionnaires were administered, three to employees (18 participants) and one to customers (123 participants). The questionnaires have a final structure of five blocks and 69 items, addressing the following contents:

1. Organizational structure questionnaire for employees.
2. Questionnaire of soft competencies for employees.
3. Human development and equity questionnaire.
4. Customer questionnaire.

Semi-structured interviews: Three interviews were carried out with employees with a total of 20 items, the contents of which correspond to:

1. Organizational structure.
2. Soft skills.
3. Fairness.

### **Procedure**

Data was collected using the Design Thinking tool, which proposes five moments. For the moment of empathizing, interviews and questionnaires were applied to employees and customers, thus gathering information about the company's problems in a real context using the SWOT technique. In the second moment, defining, interviews and questionnaires were used, and the information was systematized using the Ishikawa spine technique, which made it possible to identify causes and effects of the problem, as well as relevant categories and variables, including the big problem question.

Next, we worked on the moment of ideation, using the SCAMPER technique to generate innovative ideas that respond to the identified problem. In the fourth stage, prototyping, the previously determined categories, and variables were materialized, covering aspects such as organizational structure, soft skills, human development and equity, all based on theoretical references. Workshops and innovative actions were developed to address the problem question and achieve the stated objective. Finally, the moment of testing was proposed, using a mixed methodology to validate each of the solutions proposed in the prototype. Techniques such as infographics, paper prototyping and any other method that could effectively model the situation were used.

The criteria for rigor are based on the theoretical context and the processes of quantitative and qualitative research, as well as the distinction between them. Findings from qualitative research are considered credible because of the approach in the development of categories and the direct relationship to employee and client feedback, as well as to the epistemological foundations and methodological design.

The credibility of quantitative data is based on the relevance of the study, the situations encountered in relation to the results and their reliability, supported by the validation of instruments by experts, the rigorous analysis of the data and the contrasting of categories and variables through triangulation.

### **Data analysis**

In the analysis of the organizational structure, it is observed that the majority of respondents perceive communication within the company as effective, with 50% rating it as 'Always'. This positive result indicates a strong cohesion in the transmission of information. Furthermore, 72.2% of employees consider communication in their work teams to be 'Always or Almost always', highlighting a significant effectiveness in managing difficulties and the use of emotional intelligence. However, room for improvement is identified, with 33.3% of respondents selecting the 'Almost always' option, suggesting opportunities to optimize internal communication. These



results underline the importance of strengthening the organizational structure by focusing on specific aspects of communication to further improve effectiveness and cohesion in the company.

### **Soft skills.**

The expressive figure of 38.9% indicating that assigned tasks ‘Always’ contribute to time management suggests that there is a palpable correlation between these tasks and time efficiency, showing how these daily activities positively impact productivity. Likewise, the presence of a solid 44.4% who experience these contributions ‘Almost always’ reinforces the idea that task execution is closely linked to effective time management. In terms of leadership, the results reflect a proactive attitude on the part of staff, with a significant 38.9% stating that they take responsibility for their activities ‘Always’, indicating a strong sense of responsibility in the working day. This predisposition is supported by 22.8% who do so ‘Almost always’, showing consistent leadership in their daily roles. Participation in decision-making emerges as another crucial aspect, where a remarkable 44.4% collaborate ‘Almost always. This finding suggests an intrinsic connection between participation and productivity improvement, highlighting the importance of involving employees in decision-making to enhance organizational performance. The connection between quality of work and contributions to organizational improvement emerges as a key component. With 38.9% indicating that this relationship is constant and 44.4% mentioning that it is ‘Almost always’, it is highlighted how commitment to job quality translates into significant contributions to the continuous improvement of the organization. On the other hand, the teamwork objectives, with 50% perceiving that they are aimed at strengthening fluid communication ‘Always’ reveals the importance attached to effective cooperation. These results underline the need to strengthen soft skills in order to consolidate time management, foster authentic leadership, boost participation and ensure the quality of work in the organizational fabric.

### **Human Development and Equity.**

It is observed that the results are related to different dynamics, such as trust, perception of decisions and responses from superiors, motivation for creativity, autonomy, resistance to negative comparisons, perception of productivity and management of changes and transitions in life. It is worth noting that, in terms of interactions between colleagues, a duality stands out, with 38.9% experiencing trust or distrust “Sometimes” and another 38.9% mentioning that this occurs “Almost always”. Regarding decision making, 38.9% feel that bad decisions generate doubts “Sometimes”, while 11.1% experience this connection consistently, indicating a consistent negative relationship between decisions and job trust. In terms of motivation for creativity, 44.4% feel motivated “Almost always” when their skills are tested, suggesting constant encouragement in challenging situations. Feedback from the boss is a crucial factor, with 55.6% experiencing hesitation “Sometime” in response to their questions, highlighting the importance of communication and leadership in the organization. Initiative and genuine interest in independent work is notable, with 44.4% showing interest and carrying out activities on their own “Almost always”, reflecting a proactive attitude. In relation to comparisons with others, 38.9% “Never” associate their failures with comparisons, highlighting a positive self-evaluation and the absence of feelings of inferiority. Regarding the perception on productivity and age, 50% do not see a relationship, indicating that they have not ceased to be equally or better productive than before. Finally, in the life stage and

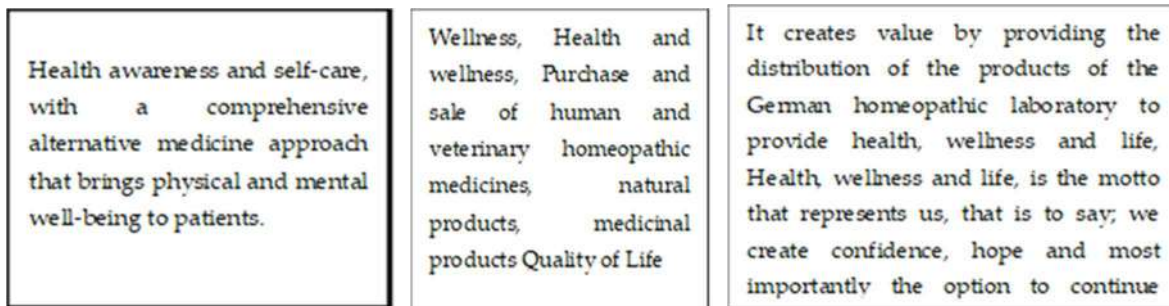
transitions, 33.3% experience significant changes “Always” or “Sometimes”, highlighting the diversity of experiences during times of transition in employees' lives.

## Results

Regarding the interviews by employees:

### Figure 3

Regarding the question: What does your company create?



**Note: Source:** Own elaboration

**Regarding the question:** Who is your audience?

Employees responded as follows: “Co-workers, Consumers of natural and alternative medicine, Public interested in well-tolerated products with minimal adverse effects, Health professionals and patients inclined towards natural and holistic therapies, who recognize the benefits of using bioregulatory medicine, Medical and veterinary community, People interested in a healthy lifestyle, Users of high technology and quality biological medicines”.

**Continuing with the question:** How does your company make a difference?

Here the employees answered the following: “Offering innovative solutions with quality bioregulatory drugs, natural without side effects, with excellent benefits for the guarantee, offering a service focused on the comprehensive approach to the external customer, taking into account three areas: friendly service, technical/scientific knowledge of medicines and generating a link that allows customer loyalty, with customer service and exclusivity and price, the company makes a difference because it helps improve the quality of life of its patients, is characterized by providing the distribution of products with all INVIMA records.

**Figure 4**

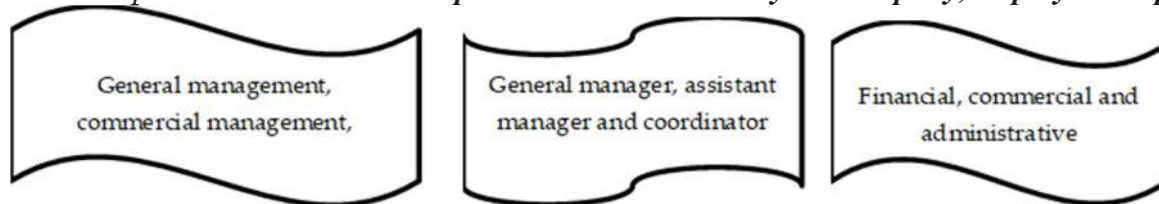
With the question: **Describe the dependencies that exist in your company, the employees answered**



**Note: Source:** Own elaboration

**Figure 5**

*With the question: Describe the dependencies that exist in your company, employees respond.*



**Note: Source:** Own elaboration

With the question: **Describe the people who have responsible span of control in your company.**

Employees respond. “Tax auditor, accountant, financial coordination, sales coordinator, Carmen, Villera, woman, enterprising, noble, capable, financial and accounting area, I can say that all in group that confirmands part of the company we handle those areas, They are very responsible and clear when making decisions”.

For the question: **The company has a clear policy that explains the decision making.**

**Explain the answer.** “Yes, since with this process an option is selected among several possible alternatives, through this process the pros and cons are evaluated and the optimal one is chosen to achieve the proposed objectives, I do not know the existence of administrative policies that are defined, we must establish criteria that allow us to continue improving the processes to obtain a clearer policy and favors the optimization of resources in decision making, control activities should be implemented in all areas of the company. All personnel must comply with the control activities according to their attributions, by means of the organizational organization chart the levels to follow are established to establish the possible decision making”.

With respect to the question: **How do you give employees loyalty tasks with the company**

**to develop their potential to the maximum?**

Explain your answer. “Good working environment, constant and effective communication, offering flexibility and balance, valuing, and recognizing the work done, providing opportunities for growth and development within the company; With loyalty, motivation and training, with respect and love, allowing the free development of personality and freedom to exercise the work in the most comfortable way for workers always respecting the objectives and guidelines of the regulations, Providing good service. Currently there are no loyalty tasks for employees, it does not apply”.

**Regarding the question How do you express your discomfort about something for someone who is isolated at work and if you are listened to?**

Explains the response. “Talking to the bosses in a respectful way I manifest the discomfort, if someone is isolated I try to talk to the colleague, looking for a way to collaborate and work as a team; talk to the person directly involved to see how it can be improved; I keep silent, I do not present discomfort for that reason, but when I need to talk to someone about my work, I am heard; In the company there is an excellent working environment in 20 years I have not seen not heard anything.”

**With the question: When you tell your boss about a situation, are you impartial to the comment.**

Explain the answer. “I try to be with objective of improvement plan for the team and that does not affect interpersonal relationships; Whenever possible, I am very direct and specific; I am free of prejudice, and I do not judge before acting; I am honest with the situation, Integral; Sometimes, depending on the situation or topic; No. They always listen; I am not. any situation that arises in my job is important and I must hold myself accountable; No, I always have arguments or data to back me up; I do not understand the question.”

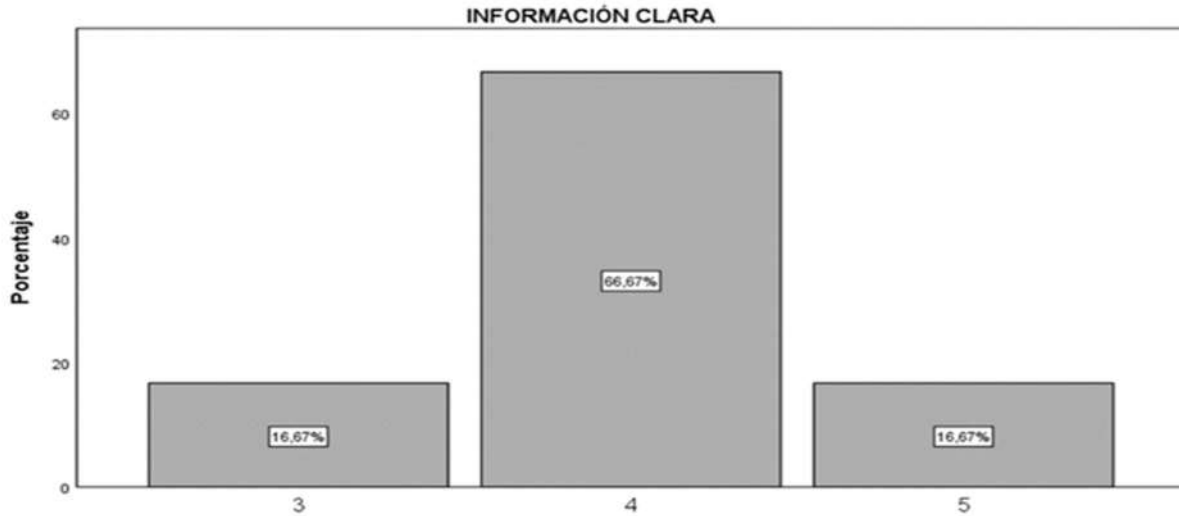
**Results of the questionnaire applied to employees and collaborators.**

**Regarding the soft skills variable.**

**DIMENSION 1: COMMUNICATIVE**

**Figure 6 shows a clear trend in “Almost always” where 66.7% of the respondents mention having clear, confident and assertive information, allowing to highlight social skills. However, 16.7% mention that “Sometimes” such information is clear, confident, and assertive.**

**Figure 6**  
**The information is clear, confident and assertive, enabling, highlighting your social skills.**

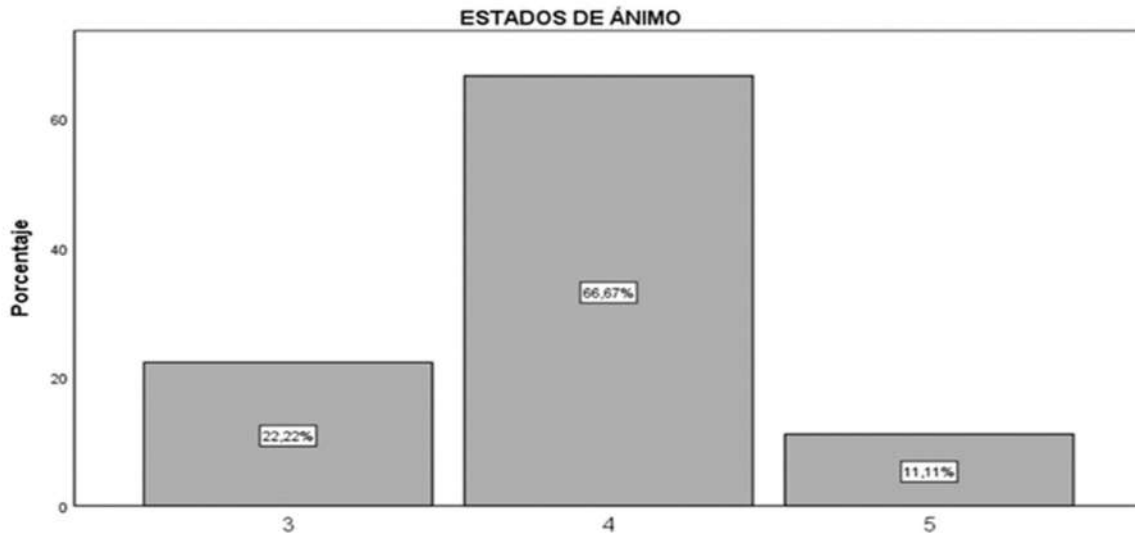


**Note:** Source: Own elaboration

Figure 7 shows a clear trend in “Almost always” where 66.7% of respondents mention that they have mood regulation; Motivation; Optimism in the face of frustrations. However, only 22.2% mentioned “Sometimes” which indicates that there is more emotional management by employees.

**Figure 7**

*Mood regulation; Motivation; Optimism in the face of frustrations.*



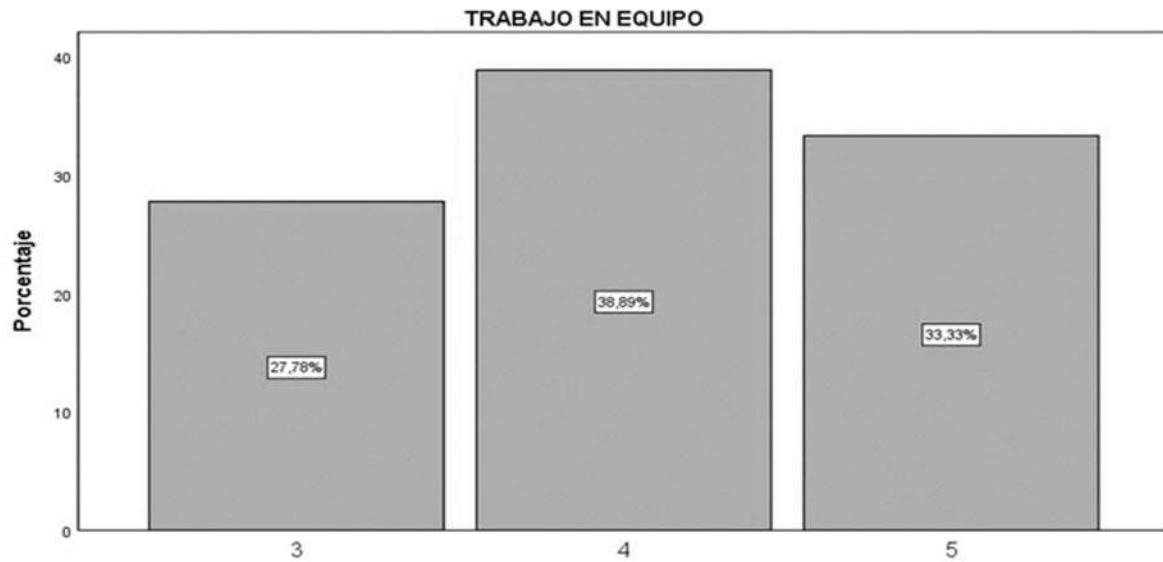
**Note:** Source: Own elaboration

Figure 8 shows that 38.9% “Almost always” of the respondents enjoy working with other colleagues or simply working alone and 33.3% of it “Always ”prefer working with other colleagues and simply working alone. However, 27.8% mention that they only “Sometimes”

prefer to work with other colleagues or simply work alone.

**Figure 8**

*I enjoy working with other colleagues or just working alone.*

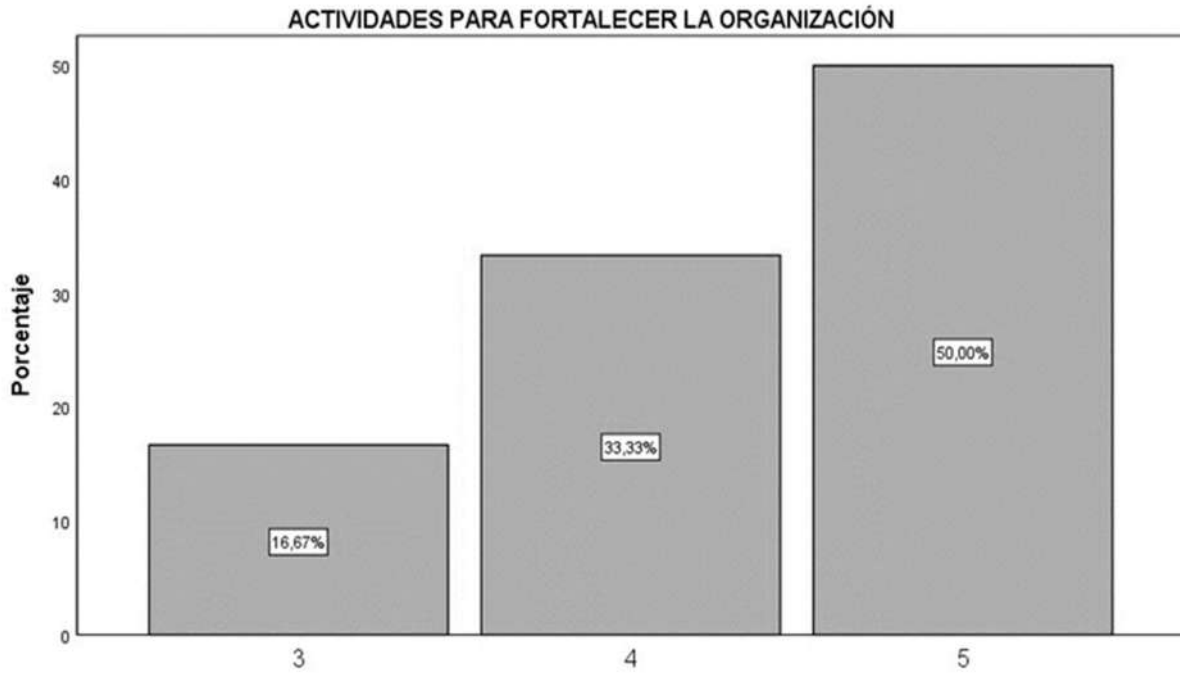


**Note:** Source: Own elaboration

**DIMENSION 2. MANAGEMENT.**

Figure 9 shows the perception of the respondents regarding the effectiveness of the activities planned to strengthen the organization. A significant 50% of the participants indicate that these activities are carried out “Always”, 16.7% mention “Sometimes”, suggesting a solid commitment to the constant implementation of activities to strengthen the organization and revealing a relatively low proportion of individuals who perceive an intermittent execution of activities.

**Figure 9**  
The activities planned at work strengthen the organization.

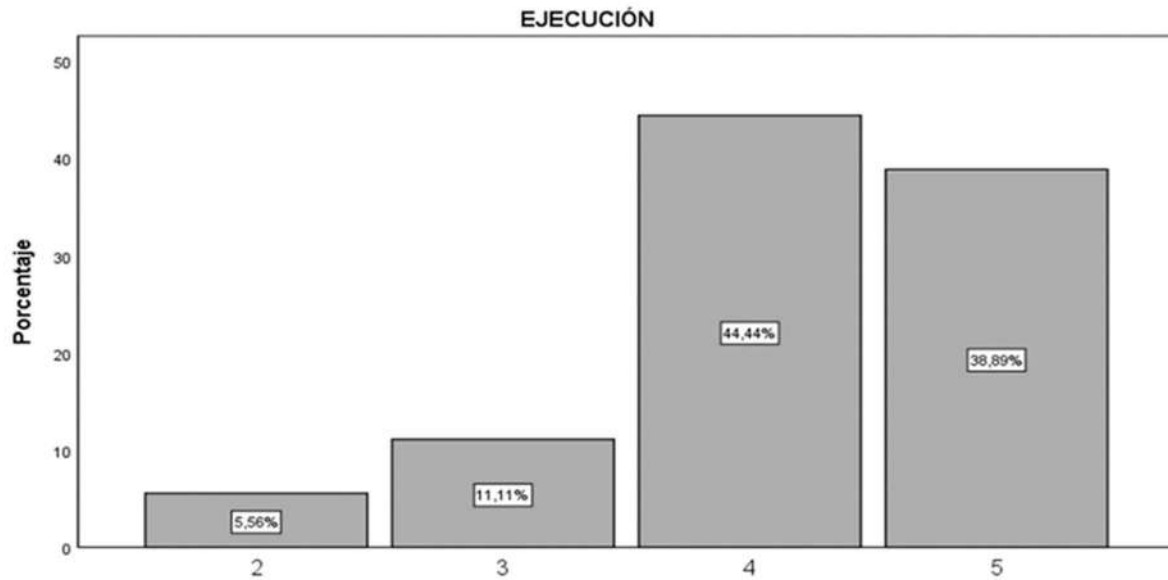


**Note: Source:** Own elaboration

Figure 10 With a remarkable 38.9%, a substantial proportion of respondents indicate that these tasks always contribute to effective time management. Additionally, 44.4% of the participants state that these tasks occur “Almost always”. This result reinforces the idea that the execution of tasks is closely related to time management in the company, as a significant proportion perceives this connection consistently, ending.

**Figure 10.**

Regarding the execution of tasks, they help to manage time in the organization of the company.



**Note:** Source: Own elaboration

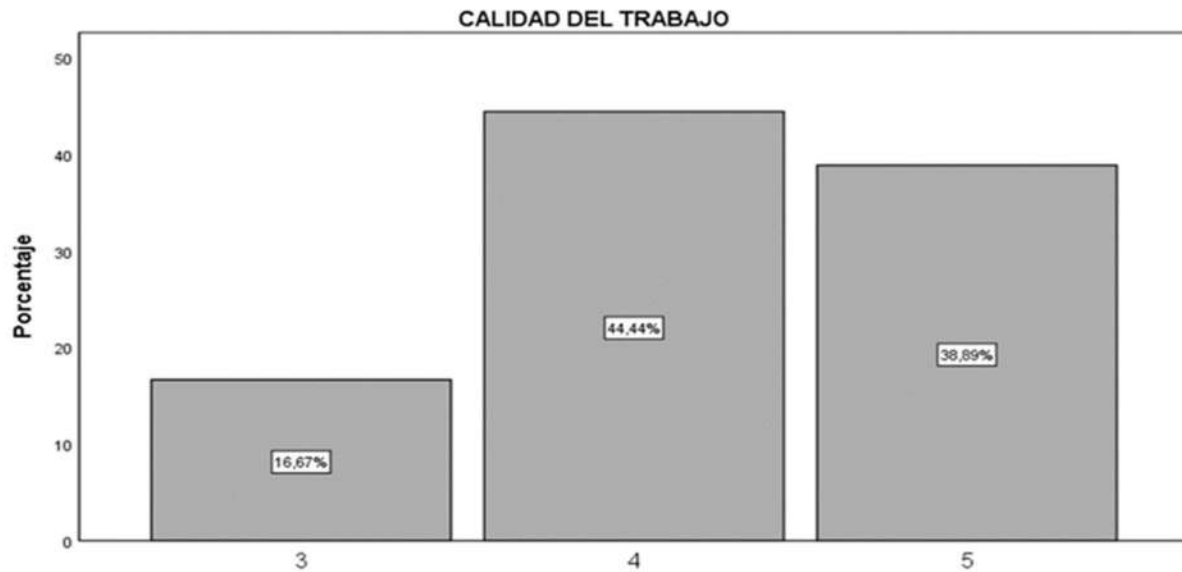
**DIMENSION 3. JOB SATISFACTION**

**Figure 11 highlights the respondents' perception of the relationship between the quality of work in the organizations and the contributions they make as employees to contribute to the improvement of the organization. 38.9% of respondents indicate that it is linked “Always”, 44.4% mention “Almost always”, 16.7% of respondents indicate “Sometimes”. This data suggests that some respondents perceive an occasional link between the quality of work and contributions to improving the organization.**



**Figure 11.**

The quality of work in organizations has to do with the contributions, which as an employee you contribute to the improvement of the organization.



**Note: Source:** Own elaboration

#### **DIMENSION 4. TEAMWORK**

According to Figure 12, a significant 50% of the respondents maintain that teamwork objectives are aimed at strengthening fluid communication “Always”, 38.9% mention that “Almost always” occurs, 11.1% indicate that it occurs “Sometimes”, therefore, most of the respondents experience an almost constant connection between teamwork objectives and the strengthening of fluid communication. However, some respondents perceive an occasional connection between teamwork objectives and improving fluid communication.

**Figure 12**

The objectives of teamwork are aimed at strengthening fluid communication.



**Note:** Source: Own elaboration

According to Figure 13, 27.8% of the respondents indicate that by proposing soft competencies in the service of the company, clear objectives are achieved “Always”, 61.1% mention that it happens “Almost always”, 11.1% of the respondents indicate that it happens “Sometimes”. Thus, the majority of respondents experience an almost constant connection between the application of soft skills and the achievement of clear objectives in the organization while some respondents perceive an occasional relationship.

**Figure 13**

When you propose soft skills in the service of the company, clear objectives are achieved in the organization.



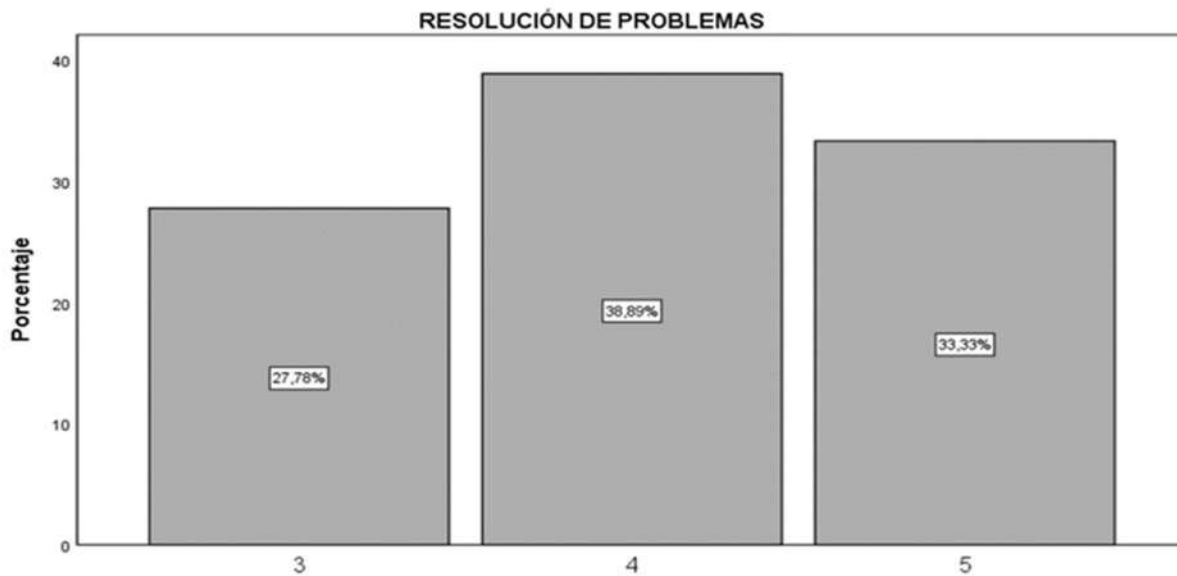
**Note:** Source: Own elaboration.

**DIMENSION 5 PROBLEM SOLVING**

According to Figure 14, 50% of the respondents mention that they “Almost always” take problems as their own and put willpower to improve them, 11.1% mention that they “Always”, 33.3% indicate “Sometimes”. This finding suggests that half of the participants adopt a proactive and committed attitude to address challenges in the company, actively seeking solutions and improvements, while other respondents choose to address problems occasionally, depending on the context or the nature of the challenge.

**Figure 14**

Do you take the problems that arise in the company as your own and put willpower into improving them?



Note: Source: Own elaboration

**Results of the questionnaire applied to employees and collaborators.**

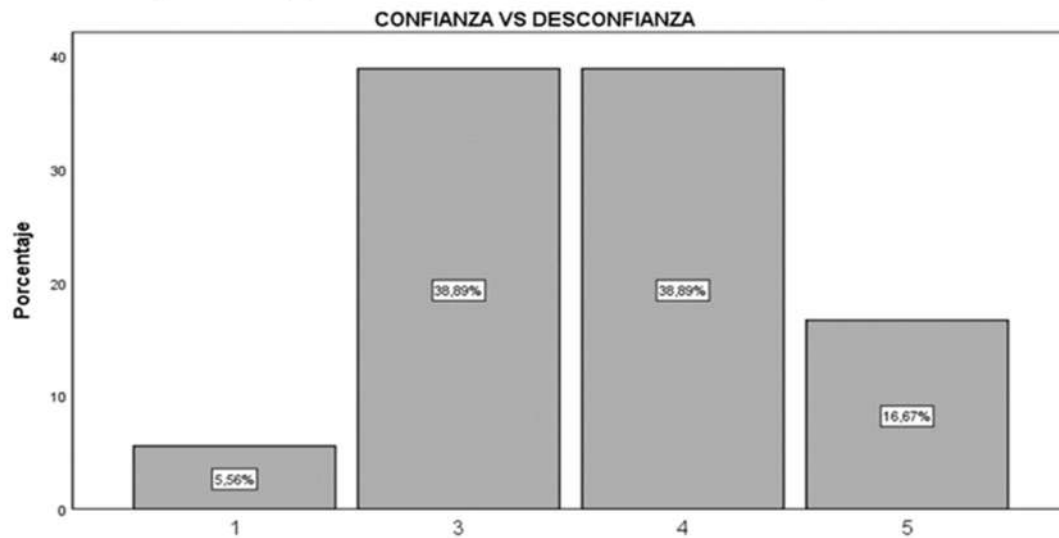
Regarding the human development and equity variable.

**I. TRUST VS. DISTRUST**

Figure 15 shows that 38.9% of the respondents indicate that activities between colleagues are developed “Sometimes” from a relationship of trust or distrust, another 38.9% mention that they are developed “Almost always”. This response suggests that there are times when both trust and distrust are experienced in peer interactions.

**Figure 15.**

The activities developed among peers are developed from the relationship of trust and distrust.



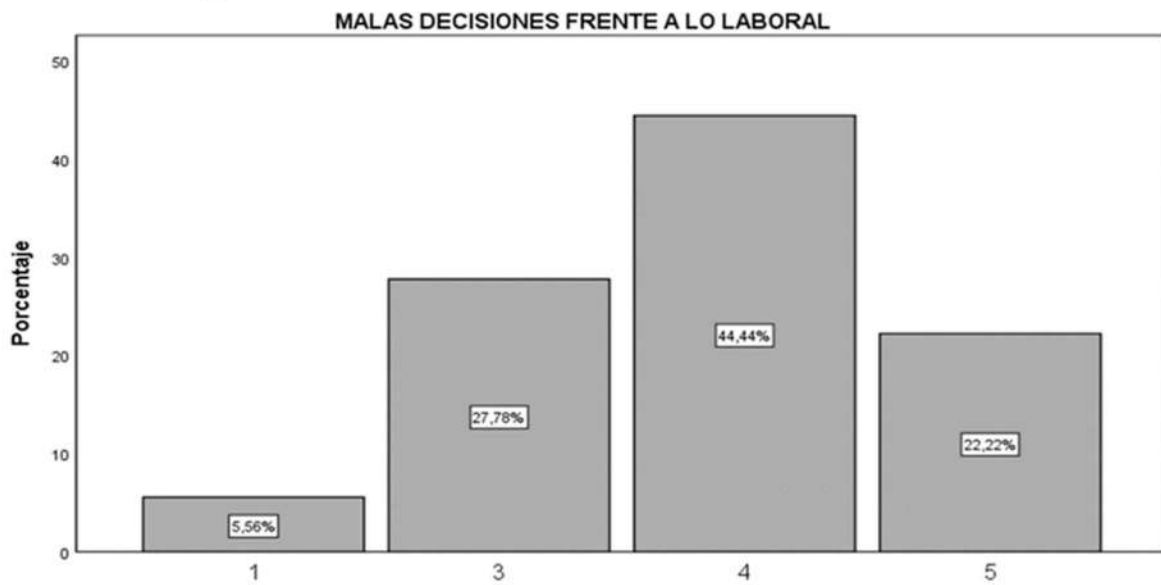
**Note: Source:** Own elaboration

## II. AUTONOMY VS. DOUBT

These responses suggest that there are specific times when decisions perceived as poor generate insecurity or uncertainty among employees, and there is even a group that consistently experiences a negative connection between decisions made and their confidence in the work environment.

**Figure 16.**

Bad decisions trigger doubts about the labor market



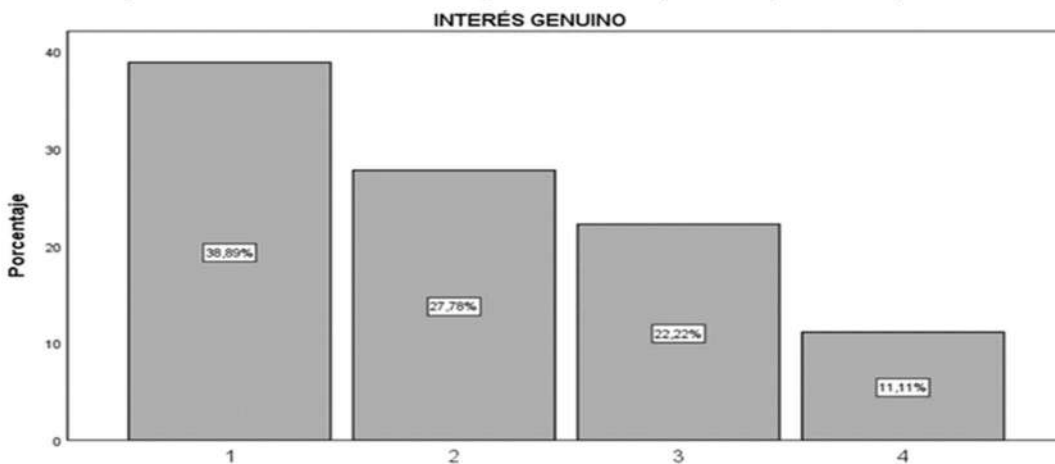
**Note: Source:** Own elaboration

### III. INDUSTRIOUSNESS VS. INFERIORITY

Figure 17 indicates that 44.4% of the respondents indicate that they “Almost always” show genuine interest in how things work and try to carry out activities on their own. 5.6% mention that they “Almost never” show genuine interest in the functioning of things and rarely try to carry out activities on their own.

**Figure 17**

You show genuine interest in how things work and try to carry out many activities on your own.



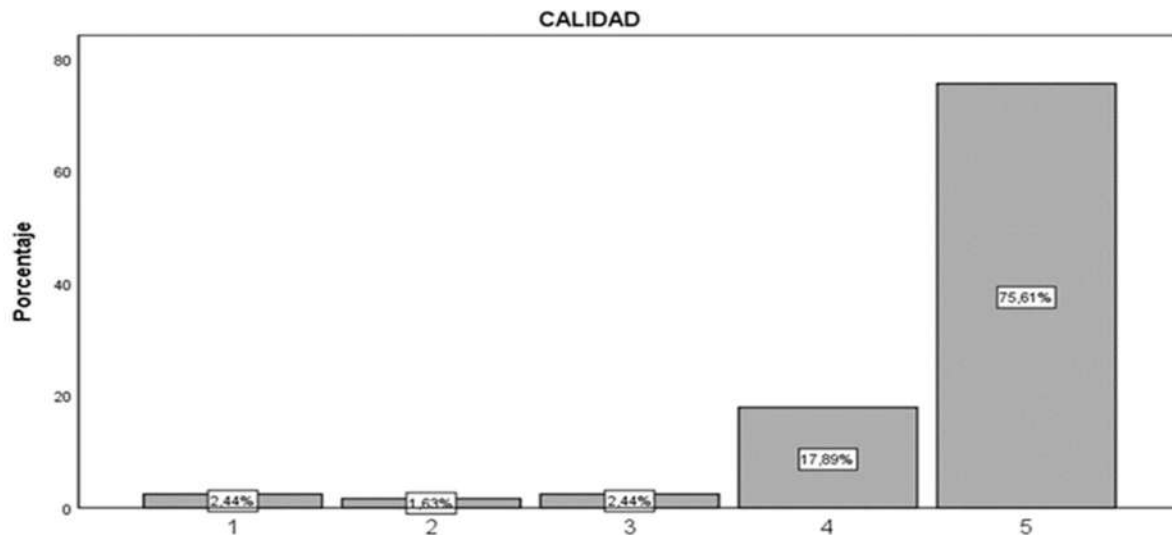
**Note: Source:** Own elaboration

**Results of the questionnaire applied to clients.  
Regarding the organizational structure variable.**

The survey on clients' perception of the company's service quality (Figure 18) reveals mostly positive results, with 76.9% of respondents stating that “always” the quality of service is excellent, 17.9% consider that “almost always” and 1.7% that “almost never” the service is excellent. This indicates that dissatisfaction is minimal, supporting the idea of generally high service quality and that there is room for incremental improvements in service delivery.

Figure 18

The quality of service is excellent.



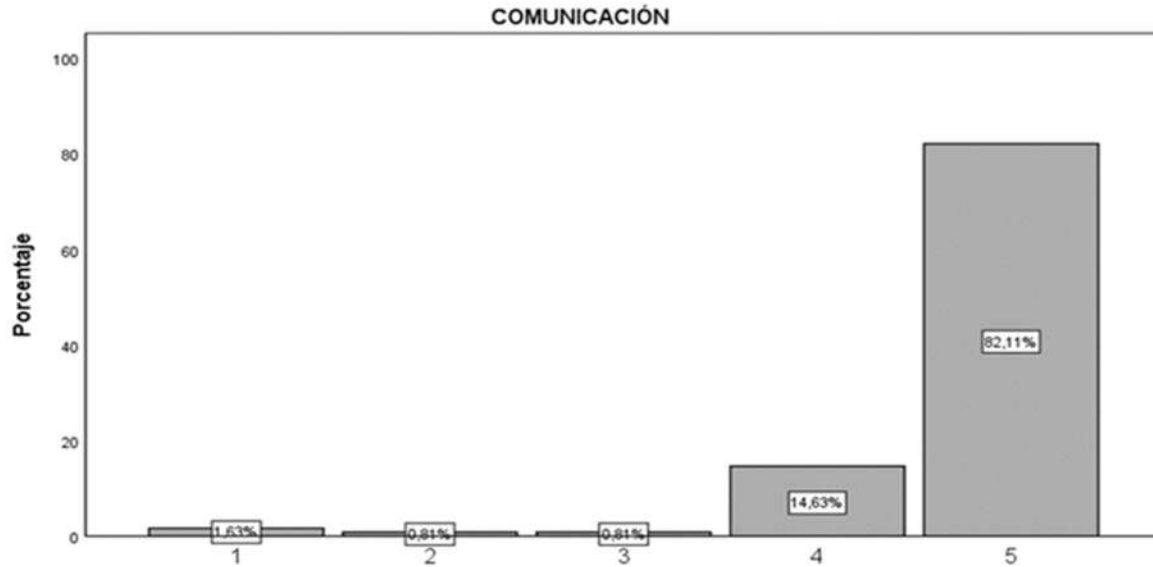
Note: Source: Own elaboration

### With regard to the soft skills variable

Figure 19 shows that assertive communication and immediate attention when requesting an order reveals a positive outlook on the part of customers, 82.2% of respondents perceive it “always”, 15.3%, “Almost always” In contrast, the low percentages of responses in the categories “Never” (0.8%), “Almost never” (0.8%), and “Sometimes” (0.8%) indicate a low incidence of problems in communication or immediate attention, suggesting that these aspects could be improved to raise the level of satisfaction among clients.

**Figure 19**

When an order is requested, it is attended to with assertive communication and immediate attention.



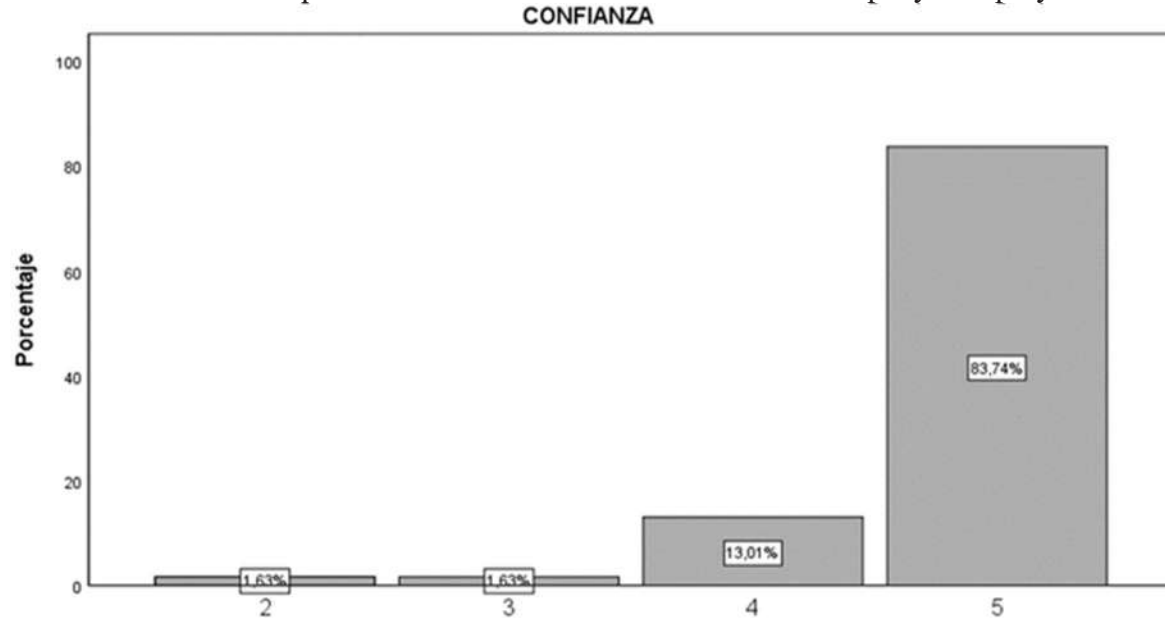
**Note: Source:** Own elaboration

**With regard to the human development variable**

Figure 20 shows the confidence that clients have in the service acquired, which is reflected in the attention provided by the company. A total of 84.9% of the respondents support this statement, indicating that “Always”, 11.8% “Almost always”, “Sometimes” 1.7%, “Never” (0%) the results show that, although there are aspects to be improved, customers trust that the company will provide the necessary attention.

**Figure 20**

Trust in the service acquired is reflected in the attention of the company's employees.



**Note: Source:** Own elaboration

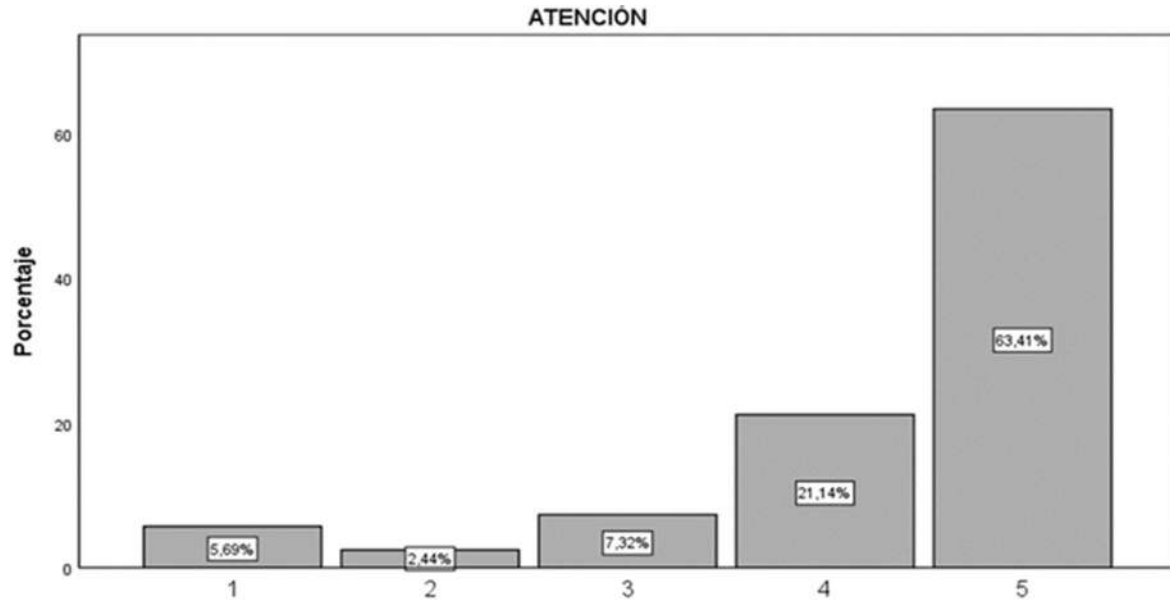
**With regard to the equity variable**

Figure 21 shows that, for the most part, clients feel listened to when they express their dissatisfaction with the service received, “Almost always” 20.8%, “Sometimes” 7.5%, “Almost never” 2.5% and “Never” 5% denote a total of 35.8% of respondents who indicate that there is room for improvement, perhaps clients do not feel confident to express themselves when they feel they are being poorly served or that when they express their dissatisfaction, they notice the lack of attention to their complaints from clients is relatively low. Once this analysis is finished, this moment is applied, and through the technique the idea is chosen, to reach the fourth moment of prototyping. See figure 3. SCAMPER technique.



**Figure 21**

When you are being badly attended, you express what you feel in the company and you are listened to.



Note: Source: Own elaboration

**Figure 22**

Moment of ideation. SCAMPER technique.





**Note: Source:** Own elaboration

**Table 1.**

Triangulation of the instruments applied

No	CATEGORIES AND/OR VARIABLES	EMPLOYEES	CUSTOMERS
1	Organizational structure	Employees responded as follows: “Co-workers, Consumers of natural and alternative medicine, Public interested in well-tolerated products with minimal adverse effects, Health professionals and patients inclined towards natural and holistic therapies, who recognize the benefits of using bioregulatory medicine, Medical and veterinary community, People interested in a healthy lifestyle, Users of high technology and quality biological medicines”. Although they identify the organizational structure of	<i>To offer innovative solutions with quality bioregulatory drugs, natural with no side effects, with excellent benefits due to the guarantee, offering a service focused on the integral approach to the external client, taking into account three areas: friendly service, technical/scientific knowledge of the drugs and generation of a link that allows customer loyalty, with</i>

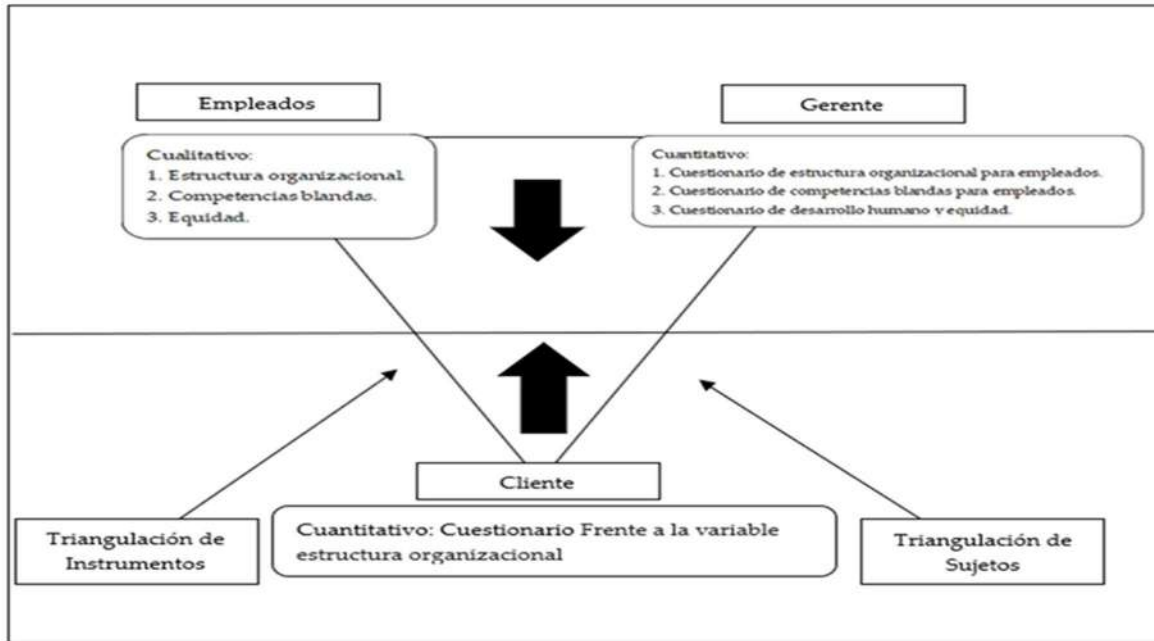
- the company, they still do not know the function and role of each unit. *Time management and planned activities with 38.9% indicating that these occur "sometimes".*
- 2     Soft skills     *With this process an option is selected among several possible alternatives, through this process the pros and cons are evaluated and the optimal one is chosen to achieve the proposed objectives, I do not know the existence of administrative policies that are defined, we must establish criteria that allow us to continue improving the processes to obtain a clearer policy and favors the optimization of resources in decision making, control activities should be implemented in all areas of the company,*  
*Internal communication, with 61.1% of employees mentioning that soft skills "almost always" for the success of collaborative work.*
- 3     Human development and equity.     *Good working environment, constant and effective communication, offering flexibility and balance, valuing and recognizing the work done, providing opportunities for growth and development within the company; With loyalty, motivation and training, With respect and love, allowing the free development of the personality and the freedom to exercise the work in the most comfortable way for workers always respecting the objectives and guidelines of the regulations Providing a good service.*  
*In human development and equity, 38.9% of the employees mentioned that "almost always", "always", "always",*
- customer service and exclusivity and price. 76.9% of the respondents state that "Always" the quality of the service is excellent, 17.9% consider that "Almost always", 1.7% express "Almost never" the service is excellent.*
- Customers feel listened to when they express their dissatisfaction with the service received, "Almost always" 20.8%, "Sometimes" 7.5%, "Almost never" 2.5% and "Never" 5%.*
- The company makes a difference because it helps to improve the quality of life of its patients, it is characterized by providing "Always", 11.8% "Almost always", "Some distribution of products with all INVIMA registrations Customers in the service purchased is reflected in the care provided by the company. A 84.9% of respondents support the statement, indicating "Sometimes" 1.7%, "Never" (0%).*

*“always”, “always”, “always”,  
“always” and “always”.*

**Note: Source:** Own elaboration.

**Figure 23**

**Triangulation of applied instruments**



**Note: Source:** Own elaboration

**Discussion**

In relation to the established objective and research question ("To design innovation strategies to strengthen the organizational structure based on soft competencies, a view from human development and equity"), the organizational structure was designed taking into account the hierarchy that includes the general management (which includes aspects such as the organizational horizon, the mission, vision, policies and values), the statutory auditor, the coordinators, the assistants, the portfolio manager, the marketing and communications area, the commercial supervisor, the customer service representative and the sales representatives (doctors and veterinarians). Soft skills, such as leadership, management (including planning), quality at work, communication and cooperation were addressed, as well as aspects related to human development and equity, such as trust versus distrust, decision making, job doubts, skills and abilities, and curiosity and motivation in the workplace.

In this project, the relevance of the study categories and variables was observed by detecting an evident weakness in the organizational structure of the company Hermanos Villera S.A.S. As is

common in any organization, knowing its hierarchy allows for better planning of functions, roles and responsibilities, as pointed out by Goleman (1995) and Mayer et al. (2000). Strengthening the organizational structure by improving the quality of relationships, communication, the work environment, resilience and organizational agility is essential to strengthen teamwork and face the challenges of the new millennium.

Also, in line with Vallejo's (2019) ideas, it is imperative to consider the work performance of employees in each specific area, which allows them to intervene effectively in interpersonal, inter-organizational and group relationships.

On the other hand, following the reflections of Pardo (2007), in the current business context it is crucial to continuously train and coach employees to ensure the provision of quality service. Working on the affective, cognitive and expressive dimensions influences the development of services with human quality, which is reflected in good work performance.

The results obtained show a positive trend in the study variables for Hermanos Villera S.A.S., which is linked to the continuous improvement of its organizational structure. Regarding internal communication, a percentage of 33.3% is observed, which indicates an aspect that requires attention.

In relation to soft competencies, a need for greater leadership is identified, with a percentage of 38.9%. This points to the importance of promoting a proactive attitude among the personnel, who assume their responsibilities in a responsible manner during the workday. In addition, a similar percentage, also 38.9%, shows a lack of recognition of the connection between the quality of work and its contribution to organizational improvement.

Finally, with regard to human development and equity, 50% of respondents do not perceive a relationship between productivity and age, suggesting a neutral perception in this regard. However, the other half may experience discouragement due to their age and how this affects their productivity. In addition, 11.1% show a consistent connection between poor decisions and job confidence.

In summary, these results reflect areas of opportunity in the company that can be addressed to promote a more effective and equitable work environment, as well as to foster staff development and improve their performance.

The practical implications of this study are the contributions that the researchers have found to offer solutions through a prototype called a digital educational magazine. This prototype presents the answers to the problems identified in real contexts. In addition, from the theoretical point of view, a theoretical and epistemic foundation was carried out in order to provide knowledge and encourage a deep reflection on the variables and categories of study.

This research will have a significant impact on employees, customers and communities, as the application of this innovation will be reflected in various ways. Therefore, it is expected that this study will contribute positively to the development and improvement of work practices, as well as to growth and innovation in the organizations involved.

### **Extended Summary.**

Soft skills, human development, and equity serve as cornerstones in the multifaceted landscape of organizational management, contributing significantly to the attainment of strategic objectives and sustainable success in the contemporary business environment. These critical elements are not only instrumental in enhancing individual employee performance but also wield considerable influence over broader organizational outcomes, including adaptability, innovation, and competitive positioning within dynamic market contexts.

Within the context of the research conducted at Hermanos Villeras S.A.S, located in the Municipality of Barranquilla, Colombia, an opportune moment arises to illuminate and address a myriad of challenges through the strategic lens of soft skills development and job competencies. The identified challenges span a spectrum of organizational domains, ranging from operational inefficiencies attributable to workload overload to interpersonal complexities inherent in leadership and teamwork dynamics. Moreover, the study underscores the importance of centralizing essential information pertaining to medication orders and financial transactions, highlighting the critical role of streamlined processes in enhancing organizational agility and decision-making prowess.

Furthermore, the research delineates the imperative of fostering a conducive learning environment conducive to human development, where continuous training initiatives are tailored to meet the evolving needs and aspirations of organizational stakeholders. This includes nurturing intrinsic motivation and cultivating a sense of commitment among employees, clients, and other key stakeholders, fostering a culture of engagement and accountability that underpins organizational resilience and long-term viability.

Importantly, the study underscores the need for organizational adaptation and change readiness in response to dynamic market forces and emerging industry trends. By embracing change as an inherent facet of organizational evolution, Hermanos Villeras S.A.S can position itself as a forward-thinking entity poised to capitalize on emerging opportunities and navigate potential challenges with agility and foresight.

In sum, this paper presents the culmination of an exhaustive research endeavor aimed at unraveling the intricate nexus between soft skills, human development, and equity within the organizational context. By shedding light on these interconnected phenomena, the study not only offers valuable insights into the prevailing challenges faced by Hermanos Villeras S.A.S but also provides a roadmap for strategic intervention and organizational transformation geared towards sustainable growth and competitive advantage.

In this study, a mixed-method research approach, complemented by the integration of design thinking methodology, was meticulously employed to comprehensively explore the multifaceted dynamics of soft skills, human development, and equity within the organizational context of Hermanos Villera S.A.S. This innovative research framework was chosen for its ability to blend quantitative and qualitative methods with the iterative, user-centered principles of design thinking, thus offering a holistic and nuanced understanding of the subject matter.

The inclusion of design thinking methodology added a unique dimension to the research process, infusing it with creativity, empathy, and a deep focus on human-centered problem-solving. By incorporating the core tenets of design thinking – namely, empathy, ideation, prototyping, and testing – researchers were able to transcend traditional research boundaries and engage with organizational stakeholders in a more meaningful and collaborative manner.

Through empathetic immersion in the day-to-day realities of employees, clients, and other key stakeholders, researchers gained invaluable insights into their needs, aspirations, and pain points. This empathetic understanding served as the foundation for ideation sessions, where researchers, alongside stakeholders, generated innovative solutions to address identified challenges and capitalize on opportunities for improvement.

Prototyping emerged as a pivotal stage in the research process, allowing researchers to translate abstract ideas into tangible prototypes or mock-ups that could be tested and refined in real-world settings. These prototypes served as vehicles for experimentation and iteration, enabling researchers to gather feedback, refine their solutions, and iterate rapidly based on user input.

Overall, the integration of design thinking methodology into the research process enriched the study with a human-centric approach, fostering creativity, collaboration, and innovation. By embracing the iterative and user-centered principles of design thinking, researchers were able to transcend traditional research boundaries, engage stakeholders in a more meaningful dialogue, and co-create solutions that are not only empirically grounded but also inherently human-centered and actionable.

The research sample comprised a diverse array of participants, including 18 employees and 123 clients, representing a broad spectrum of stakeholder groups. This diverse composition ensured the inclusion of perspectives from various organizational roles and external stakeholders, such as consumers, medical professionals, common individuals, legal entities, and natural persons. By capturing insights from these diverse perspectives, the research aimed to offer a holistic view of the complex interplay between soft skills, human development, and equity within the organizational setting.

The research design was meticulously crafted to facilitate the simultaneous collection of quantitative and qualitative data through a concurrent triangulation model. This model enabled the integration of multiple data sources, including surveys and interviews, to triangulate findings and enhance the validity and reliability of the research outcomes. Surveys were administered to gather quantitative data on employee profiles, while interviews were conducted to delve deeper into qualitative aspects, such as contextual characteristics, situational dynamics, and the manifestation of soft skills within the organizational setting.

Through surveys, participants provided demographic information, including their roles within the organization and their perceptions of the importance and application of soft skills in their day-to-day activities. Meanwhile, interviews offered a platform for participants to share their experiences, insights, and challenges related to soft skills development, human development initiatives, and equity practices within the organization. This qualitative data provided rich context and depth to complement the quantitative findings, offering a comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon.

Overall, the utilization of a mixed-method research approach, coupled with a concurrent triangulation model, allowed for a robust and holistic exploration of the complex interrelationships between soft skills, human development, and equity within the organizational context of Hermanos Villera S.A.S. By integrating quantitative and qualitative data sources and perspectives, the research aimed to generate actionable insights and recommendations to inform organizational policies, practices, and interventions aimed at fostering a culture of excellence, inclusivity, and equity within the organization.

The findings of the study revealed the critical importance of soft skills in facilitating effective collaboration and teamwork within the organization. Specifically, 61.1% of the surveyed employees identified soft skills as essential for the success of collaborative projects and initiatives. However, the research also identified areas for improvement, particularly in time management and activity planning, where only 38.9% of employees reported consistent adherence to best practices. Moreover, the study underscored the need for greater proactivity in problem-solving endeavors, with 44.4% of employees indicating that they encounter challenges only occasionally.

Furthermore, the research shed light on the significant role of human development and equity in shaping the organizational culture and climate. According to the survey results, 38.9% of employees emphasized the critical importance of human development initiatives in fostering personal and professional growth within the organization. Similarly, a substantial portion of

employees (38.9%) highlighted the significance of equity-related practices and policies in promoting fairness, inclusivity, and diversity within the workplace.

Building upon these findings, the study proposed the development and implementation of an innovative prototype aimed at strengthening the organizational structure and enhancing alignment with overarching strategic objectives. This prototype leveraged insights from the research findings to devise targeted interventions focused on optimizing soft skills development, fostering a culture of continuous learning and growth, and promoting equitable practices across all facets of organizational operations using design thinking methodology.

The application and evaluation of the innovation prototype marked a significant turning point in the research journey, yielding promising results that underscored its potential to drive positive organizational change and foster a culture of innovation and inclusivity within Hermanos Villera S.A.S. Notably, the implementation of the prototype led to discernible improvements across key performance indicators, reflecting a tangible impact on various facets of organizational functioning.

One of the most notable outcomes of the prototype's deployment was the marked enhancement in employee satisfaction levels. Through targeted interventions informed by research insights, such as tailored training programs and opportunities for skill development, employees reported heightened levels of engagement, motivation, and overall job satisfaction. This uptick in employee morale translated into tangible gains in productivity, retention rates, and overall organizational effectiveness.

Moreover, the prototype's integration into existing administrative policies and loyalty initiatives proved instrumental in catalyzing organizational change and fostering a culture of innovation and inclusivity. By aligning innovation efforts with strategic objectives and embedding them within the fabric of the organization, leaders were able to cultivate a sense of ownership and collective responsibility among employees, driving sustained momentum towards positive change.

Furthermore, the prototype's impact extended beyond the confines of internal operations, reverberating outward to enhance collaboration effectiveness and organizational agility. By streamlining processes, breaking down silos, and fostering cross-functional collaboration, the prototype facilitated a more agile and responsive organizational culture capable of navigating complex challenges and seizing emergent opportunities in the marketplace.

Importantly, the success of the innovation prototype served as a catalyst for cultural transformation within Hermanos Villera S.A.S, instilling a mindset of continuous improvement, experimentation, and adaptability across all levels of the organization. Through ongoing evaluation, iteration, and refinement, leaders were able to cultivate a culture where innovation thrived, diversity was celebrated, and inclusivity was embraced as a core organizational value.

In conclusion, this research contributes valuable insights into the complex interplay between soft skills, human development, and equity within organizational management contexts. By elucidating the critical role of these elements in driving organizational effectiveness and resilience, the study underscores the importance of adopting a holistic and integrated approach to talent management and organizational development. Moreover, the findings highlight the transformative potential of innovative interventions informed by empirical research and grounded in principles of equity, inclusivity, and continuous improvement. Ultimately, this research serves as a foundational framework for future investigations and initiatives aimed at enhancing organizational performance and fostering sustainable growth in diverse organizational settings.



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